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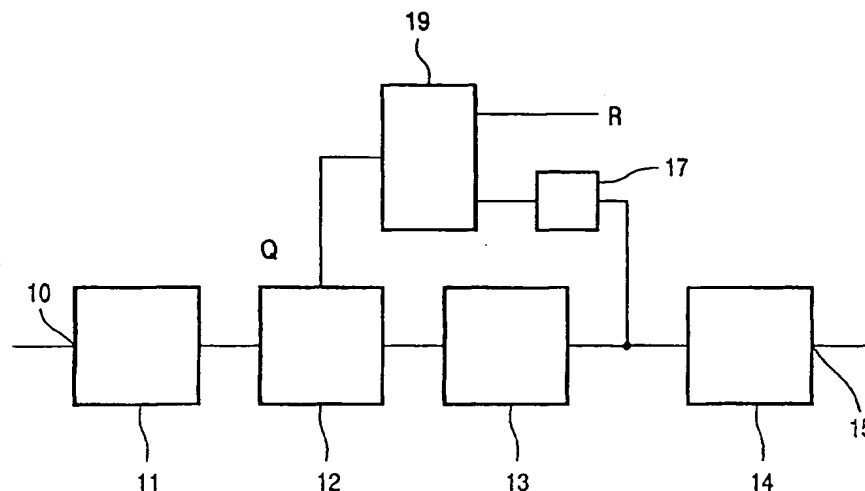
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(54) Title: IMAGE CODING USING QUANTIZER SCALE SELECTION



(57) Abstract: A video data stream is divided (11) into blocks. First quantization scales  $Q$  are determined (17, 19) for respective ones of the blocks, so that the quantization scales  $Q$  are sufficiently large to realize a predetermined compression rate. Subsequently it is determined (17, 19) whether there is a second quantization scale  $Q'$  that is larger than the first quantization scale  $Q$  for that at least one of the blocks and that results in a distortion of the at least one of the blocks that is less than or substantially equal to the distortion realized with the first quantization scale  $Q$  for the at least one of the blocks. The digital data stream is encoded (12, 13, 14) using the second quantization scale  $Q'$  for the at least one of the blocks when said second quantization scale  $Q'$  exists.

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